

Message Text

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14

ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY KABUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4902

INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

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C O N F I D E N T I A L KABUL 7209

EXDIS

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, AF, PK

SUBJECT: ARSHAD VIEWS ON PAK-AFGHAN RELATIONS

1. SUMMARY: DURING CALL BY AMBASSADOR ELIOT ON
PAKISTANI AMBASSADOR ALI ARSHAD NOVEMBER 2 ARSHAD
CHACTERIZED BHUTTO SPEECH OF OCTOBER 31 AS
"GENEROUS" WITH REGARD TO OVERTURES TO AFGHANISTAN,
AND FORESAW SOME IMPROVEMENT IN PAK-AFGHAN RELATIONS
IF BHUTTO ALSO SHOWS "GENEROSITY" TOWARD NAP LEADER
WALI KHAN AND IF AFGHAN RESPONSE TO SUPREME COURT DECISION
DOES NOT ESCALATE INTO RENEWED TERRORIST ACTIVITY.
ARSHAD BELIEVES DAOUD'S PUSHTUNISTAN STANCE IS HOWEVER
BASICALLY INFLEXIBLE FOR HISTORICAL REASONS, AND THAT
THIS STANCE IS ONLY marginally AFFECTED BY MOVEMENTS
IN AFGHAN-SOVIET RELATIONS. END SUMMARY.

2. AMBASSADOR HAD OPPORTUNITY MORNING NOVEMBER 2
DURING CALL ON PAK AMBASSADOR TO HEAR HIS VIEWS
ON PAK-AFGHAN RELATIONS. AMBASSADOR ARSHAD RE-
TURNED FROM CONSULTATIONS IN ISLAMABAD OCTOBER 26.

3. BHUTTO OCTOBER 31 SPEECH AND AFGHAN RESPONSE.
ARSHAD DESCRIBED PRIME MINISTER BHUTTO AS HAVING
BEEN "GENEROUS" IN HIS OFFER TO TALK ON PAK-
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AFGHAN BILATERAL RELATIONS. (COMMENT: WE ASSUME

ARSHAD WAS SPEAKING OF BHUTTO'S STATEMENT TO EFFECT HE WAS READY AT ANY TIME TO GO TO KABUL FOR DISCUSSIONS WITH AFGHAN LEADERS ON BILATERAL ISSUES. STICKING POINT HERE IS OF COURSE DIFFERENCE OF PAK AND AFGHAN OPINION ON WHAT IS DISCUSSABLE UNDER "BILATERAL ISSUES" RUBRIC. IN ADDITION, AND AMBASSADOR REMINDED ARSHAD OF THIS, AFGHANS IN PAST HAVE QUESTIONED SINCERITY OF PUBLIC BHUTTO STATEMENTS OF WILLINGNESS TO MEET WITH DAOUD AND HAVE CALLED FOR PRIVATE PREPARATION OF SUCH A MEETING.) HE WENT ON TO SAY THAT AFGHAN RESPONSE UP TO THAT POINT (SEE KABUL 7184) TO NAP DECISION AND BHUTTO SPEECH HAD BEEN "ABOUT WHAT WAS TO BE EXPECTED". HE INDICATED HIS HOPE THAT AFGHAN WOULD KEEP THEIR DISPLEASURE IN PROPOGANDA CHANNEL, AND WOULD GO NO FURTHER. IN SAME CONNECTION HE RECALLED CERTAINTY ON PART OF PAKISTANIS THAT AFGHANS HAVE IN PAST SPONSORED SABOTAGE AND GUERRILLA ACTIVITIES IN PAKISTAN. HE SAID HE WOULD BRING TO THE AFGHAN GOVERNMENT'S ATTENTION THAT HE CONSIDERS ITS FIRST RADIO COMMENTARIES ON THE SUPREME COURT DECISION AND BHUTTO'S SPEECH HAD VIOLATED THE AGREEMENT BANNING AD-HOMINEM PROPAGANDA. RECALLING PERIOD JUST PRIOR TO DELIVERY OF NAP OPINION HOWEVER ARSHAD SAID HE HAD SENSED A GENERAL SOFTENING OF THE AFGHAN STND ON PUSHTUNISTAN AND A FAIRLY WIDESPREAD BELIEF THAT COURT WOULD NOT RULE AGAINST THE NAP. AS EVIDENCE OF AFGHAN "SOFTENING" ARSHAD CITED APPARENT RESTRAINT BY GOA ON ACTIVITIES OF AJMAL KHATTAK.

4. "DAOUD'S PUSHTUNISTAN STUND". USING THIS OPHPHASE, AMBASSADOR ARSHAD REFERRED TO THE STATE OF AFFAIRS BETWEEN DAOUD'S GOVERNMENT AND THAT OF PAKISTAN. ARSHAD BELIEVES THAT FAMILIAL-TRIBAL-HOSTIRICAL REALITIES ARE SUCH THAT BASIC AFGHAN POSITIONS TOWARD THE PUSHTUNISTAN-BALUCHISTAN ISSUE CANNOT CHANGE WHILE DAOUD IS IN POWER. HIS STANCE ALSO IS IN AN APPROPRIATELY NATIONALIST

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IMAGE IN A "PUSHTUN DOMINATED STATE THAT REALLY NEEDS A PUSHTUN MAJORITY," AS ARSHAD PHRASED IT. INTERNAL CHANGES IN AFGHANISTAN, SUCH AS CABINET CHANGES THAT CAME AT THE END OF SEPTEMBER (KABUL 6429), THEREFORE WOULD NOT APPEAR TO ARSHAD TO MAKE A GREAT DIFFERENCE IN THE COURSE OF PAK-AFGHAN RELATIONS.

5. SOVIET ATTITUDES. ARSHAD BELIEVES AFGHAN ATTITUDES TOWARD PAKISTAN HAVE THEIR OWN DYNAMIC AND THAT SOVIET-AFGHAN RELATIONS HAVE ONLY A MARGINAL EFFECT UPON THESE. WITH REGARD TO SOVIET ATTITUDES TOWARD RECENT CABINET AND OTHER CHANGES IN AFGHANISTAN, ARSHAD REPORTED HAVING HEARD RUMORS OF UNHAPPINESS. ARSHAD MENTIONED ALSO HAVING HEARD REPORTS TO THE EFFECT THAT THE SOVIETS HAVE MADE KNOWN THIS DISPLEASURE TO THE AFGHANS.

6. FUTURE PROSPECTS. ARSHAD SAID THAT BHUTTO "MAY BE GENEROUS" TOWARD WALI KHAN. WALI'S POLITICAL ACTIVITY WOULD OF COURSE BE BANNED FOR FIVE YEARS, BUT, COMMENTED ARSHAD, BHUTTO COULD STILL SHOW "GENEROSITY". ARSHAD BELIEVES THAT PAK-AFGHAN RELATIONS WILL BE AFFECTED BY THE TREATMENT BHUTTO METES OUT TO WALI KHAN. ARSHAD BELIEVES HE HAS BEEN GETTING INDIRECT SIGNALS FROM THE AFGHANS THAT THEY SET CONSIDERABLE STORE BY "HOW IT GOES WITH WALI KHAN" AND MIGHT SOFTEN THEIR POSITION IF ARSHAD'S PREDICTIONS ARE FULFILLED. (COMMENT: THIS EMBASSY TOO HAS RECEIVED SIMILAR SIGNALS CONCERNING WALI KHAN'S FUTURE TREATMENT. SEE KABUL 6888, PARA 5)

7. DAOUD-WALDHEIM LETTER. AMBASSADOR RELATED MALIKYAR-CONSTABLE EXCHANGE CONCERNING DAOUD'S LATTER REPORTED STATE 250503. ARSHAD CITED OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES OF AFGHAN "PUBLIC LINE, PRIVATE LINE" EXPLANATION FOR THEIR DIPLOMACY. HOW, AMBASSADOR ARSHAD ASKED, COULD THIS STYLE BE CONFIDENTIAL

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TRANSLATED INTO REAL ACTS OF IMPROVEMENT IN RELATIONS WHEN AFGHANS COULD USE PLOY OF SAYING "OF COURSE WE AGREE WITH YOU PRIVATELY TO DO THIS AND SO, BUT YOU CAN'T EXPECT US TO ADMIT PUBLICLY WE HAVE AGREED TO THIS". (COMMENT: ARSHAD'S OPINION SEEMS CLOSELY TO PARALLEL SHAHNAWAZ'S AS REPORTED ISLAMABAD 10105.)

8. CHAVAN VISIT TO AFGHANISTAN. ARSHAD NATURALLY EXPRESSED GREAT INTEREST IN INDIAN EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTER CHAVAN'S JUST-CONCLUDED VISIT TO AFGHANISTAN. HE SAID HIS INFORMATION IS THAT TWO MAIN SUBJECTS OF DISCUSSION WERE BANGLADESH AND PAK-AFGHAN RELATIONS.
ELIOT

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